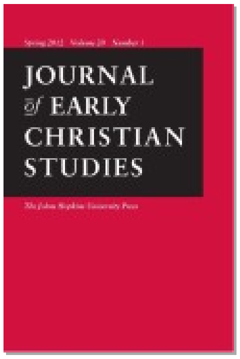
Symbol and Icon: Dionysius the Areopagite and the Iconoclastic Crisis (review)



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tradition. An outline of the middle recension is provided and his analysis of Ignatian theology is well illustrated, if perhaps a bit succinctly. The epistle of Polycarp (117–33) by the late Boudewijn Dehandschutter follows. The essay is balanced and thorough, yet omits the theological component found elsewhere. While he is well known for his work on *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (BETL 52 and 205), this was not his present assignment.

The *Martyrdom* (135–57) essay is offered instead by Gerd Buschmann, who has published widely on the text since his 1994 monograph. Special attention is given to historicity, intertextual relationships, and structure. Curiously, his piece on theology depends heavily upon the role of Ignatius. Ulrich H. J. Körtner then offers a solid review of the fragments of Papias (160–79). While his appraisal is most helpful, this is among the shortest of sections and no doubt draws largely on his 1983 monograph (FRLANT 133). Pratscher appears yet again with a review of the apology of Quadratus (181–95), a text that is not typically included separately within the apostolic fathers. His analysis is constructive and reflects known patristic testimony.

The section on *Diognetus* (197–213) by Horacio E. Lona naturally follows that of Quadratus. His 2007 commentary on the same topic (KFA 8) stands as the most complete survey on the subject to date, and this essay reflects many conclusions found there. David Hellholm concludes the entries with his article on *Shepherd of Hermas* (215–42). His concern for structure and genre are readily apparent throughout, and his analysis of apocalyptic background reflects his earlier study of 1980 (ConBNT 13). The volume closes with Jürg Ulrich's appropriate closing essay, "The Apostolic Fathers Yesterday and Today" (243–60), and a listing of editions and translations of the apostolic fathers since the work of Cotelier.

In summary, one finds here a meticulous introduction to continental scholarship on the apostolic fathers and a welcome publication for the English reader. The style is occasionally a little technical for the casual student or for use in the classroom, but the work is certainly sound in concept and design.

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Filip Ivanović
Symbol and Icon: Dionysius the Areopagite
and the Iconoclastic Crisis
Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications/Wipf & Stock, 2010.

This is a difficult book to evaluate. The introduction says that the object of the book is "to examine what contribution the writings of the Areopagite could have provided the theology of icons and in what measure they were actually used during the iconoclastic controversy" (4). What advancement Ivanović has made toward that goal is not readily manifest, in part because the text of *Symbol and Icon* contains significant irregularities of attribution that obscure its relationship to previous scholarship.

I ask readers to bear with me: this is a complex matter, and it is important to give extended examples to illustrate what is troubling about the use of other scholars' work in the book. I reproduce below a passage from *Symbol and Icon* (48–49), with the material from the footnotes on those pages inserted in parentheses where the callouts appear in the main text.

> According to the report of Nicephorus, Constantine negated the title "Theotokos" to the Virgin and "intended to completely remove it from the liturgy of Christians." (n. 42: Nicephorus, *Scripta adversus Iconomachos* 341.) It seems that he had also negated the power of the Virgin to intercede for the Church; much less efficient would be, then, the intercessions of other saints. As a matter of fact, not only the title "Theotokos," but also the title "Saint" should have been negated. Despite this was probably an expression of private opinion of Constantine [*sic*], the others supported him in his opposition to the cult of the Virgin and other saints. Mary was, for most iconoclasts, the same as she was for the orthodox: the super-glorious Mother of God. But, after all, she was just a human being, just like the apostles, the prophets, and the saints. (n. 43: Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom*, 111–12.) One thing would be the respect (τιμή) for the saints, and completely another would be the veneration (προσκύνησις) of them and the production of their images. (n. 44: Theodorus, *Antirheticus II* 369.) The situation was even more difficult for angels—at least the saints were once alive, had human faces, and were material, but angels were spirits that could not be touched and therefore could not be circumscribed in the images.

Given the conventions of footnoting, a reader would expect that at the very least the sentence that carries callout 43 would in some manner be a paraphrase of something in Pelikan. Or, a reader could conclude that callout 43 covered several previous sentences' worth of paraphrasing of Pelikan. A reader likely would not expect, however, the very close relationship between these paragraphs in *Symbol and Icon* and the words of Jaroslav Pelikan in *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom*, especially for the text that comes after the callout. For comparison, here is an extended quotation of Pelikan's work, at the pages cited by Ivanović (111–12):

> According to the report of Nicephorus, Constantine "dares to do away with the term 'Theotokos' and to remove it completely from the tongue of Christians." He was charged with having expunged references to Mary from the litanies and canticles used in worship. (Niceph., *Antirr.*2.4 [PG 100:341]) As part of this campaign, he was even said to have denied that Mary could intercede for the church; much less, therefore, would the intercessory prayers of the other saints have any efficacy. (Niceph., *Antirr.*1.9 [PG 100:216]) In fact, not only the title "Theotokos" but even the title "saint" was to be proscribed. Although some of this was an expression of Constantine's private opinions, others joined him in the opposition to the devotional extravagances connected with the cult of the Theotokos and the saints. Mary was, to most of the iconoclasts no less than to the orthodox, "the utterly immaculate and superglorious truly Theotokos"; but she was only human, as were the prophets, apostles, and martyrs. Amid all their high praise for her and for other saints, however, the iconoclast made clear that this did not mean that they were to be "portrayed by the art of a [pagan] Greece." (CCP [754] ap.CNIC. [787] [Mansi 13:272; 277]) It was one thing to pay the proper respect [τιμή] to the saints, quite another to address worship [προσκύνησις] to them, and yet another to portray them in worshipful images. (ap.Thdr.Stud.*Antirr*.2.26 [PG 99:369])

> If portraits of Christ, of Mary, and of the saints were to be rejected on these grounds, the portraits of angels in Christian images were suspect on additional grounds as well. For at least the former had once lived on earth as human beings and had possessed faces and features of which a contemporary artist could presumably have made a picture. But "no one has ever seen an angel. How do they make a picture of an angel?" And by what right, specifically, "do they make and depict angels as though they had the form of a human being and were equipped with two wings?" (ap.Joh.H.*Const*.11; 12 [PG 95:328]) Angels were spirits and could not be touched; therefore they could not be circumscribed in a picture, for they did not have bodies. (ap.Thdr.Stud.*Antirr*.3.1.47 [PG 99:412])

In *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom* Pelikan places citations in the wide blank margin alongside the main text. In this quotation, I have put Pelikan's marginal notes in parentheses roughly where they would relate to the text. A reader comparing the passage from *Symbol and Icon* to Pelikan's text would likely notice two things. First, even that part of the passage from *Symbol and Icon* that is reasonably covered by the footnote to Pelikan resembles the original work too closely for most of us to be comfortable describing it as a "paraphrase." Second, the portion of the text that follows the callout to Pelikan, which no reader would have reason to imagine is anything but the exposition of the author of *Symbol and Icon* is, itself, quite similar to the remainder of the passage in Pelikan.

Such problematic references to the work of other historians occur with alarming frequency. The following are examples of authors whose work is cited by the book in a manner indicating paraphrase, but whose words and even sentences are disquietingly similar to the text of *Symbol and Icon*:

(1) W. Riordan, cited at *Symbol and Icon*, 18–20, 30,
(2) T. Gregory at 38–40,
(3) J. Lowden at 40–41,
(4) J. Meyendorff at 42–43,
(5) G. Ladner at 43,
(6) A. Kazhdan and G. Constable at 45,
(7) C. Schönborn at 47, 80–81,
(8) G. Florovsky at 48,
(9) M. Barasch at 52–53, 55,
(10) E. Kitzinger on 63,
(11) P. Henry on 77,
(12) K. Parry on 84–85,
(13) W. Tatarkiewicz on 89 and 91, and
(14) A. Besançon on 90.

Similar problems occur when the text of *Symbol and Icon* refers to works not published in English. I did not check all non-English sources cited by the book, but a quick glance at the passages in *Symbol and Icon* that cite Salvatore Lilla's 1982 *Augustinianum* article ("Introduzione allo studio dello Ps. Diogini l'Areopagita") and the 1983 Italian translation of V. V. Byčkov's *Vizantijskaja estetika: Teoretičeskie problemy* reveal that they are slightly adjusted English translations of the Italian texts. Consider the following passage from *Symbol and Icon*, 60, which carries a single footnote, rendered below in parentheses:

> Byzantines, as well as Dionysius, concentrated their attention on the psychological aspect of the influence that art and the beautiful exercised on man. The psychology, which reflected connections between concrete persons and their mutable interrelations, formed an important part of Byzantine gnoseology and one of the principle nerves of entire spiritual life. The comprehension of absolute beauty was carried out on the level of the psychic subconscious (super-sensible and super-rational) in the process of liturgical and artistic experience. (n.35: Bychkov, *L'estetica bizantina*, 100)

A reader would be guided by convention to think that this citation, which occurs without quotation marks, signals that the author has paraphrased the work cited. She would be surprised to go to the work cited and find this:

> In proposito i pensieri bizantini concentravano l'attenzione sull'aspetto psicologico dell'influsso che l'arte e il bello esercitavano sull'uomo. L'ontologia cristiana fu elaborata e fissata in un sistema di formule dogmatiche la cui veridicità non fu praticamente messa in dubbio nel corso di lunghi secoli. La psicologia, che rifletteva invece i legami tra le persone concrete e le loro mutevoli interrelazioni, formava una parte rilevante della gnoseologia bizantina, uno dei nerbi principali di tutta la vita spirituale. La comprensione della «bellezza assoluta» si effettuava, in ultima analisi, a livello di inconscio psichico («super-sensibile e super-razionale», secondo la terminologia patristica) nel processo dell'«experienza» liturgica e artistica.

The difficulty here is simple: what the citation style of *Symbol and Icon* suggests is a paraphrase is, in reality, an extended and selective translation of the work it cites.

Lastly and most troubling, there are portions of the book that bear quite a close resemblance to earlier works, but do not acknowledge any relationship at all to those works. Compare, for example, the discussion in *Symbol and Icon* of John of Damascus's typology of images (67–69) to the discussion in Anita Strezova's 2008 *Byzantinoslavica* article, "Relation of Image to Its Prototype in Byzantine Iconophile Theology," esp. 89–93. In *Symbol and Icon*, the extended descriptions of the six categories John has for images differ only slightly from those given in Strezova's article. Here are two short indicative examples from that section of *Symbol and Icon*:

> Similar to the fourth type, the fifth type also exposes the idea of analogy, but limited to the specific dominion of history. This type of image represents the theological comprehension of past events and concerns the prefiguration (προεικονίζειν) of future events. (68)

> For iconodule theologians it seems that each creature could be considered an image in the wide sense, since all creatures are modeled according to ideas contained in God, who is the celestial prototype. (69)

Neither of these examples, which stand as their own paragraphs in *Symbol and Icon*, carries any reference to indicate its debt. For comparison, here are the corresponding passages from Strezova's article:

> The fifth type of image extends the idea of analogy but is limited to specific domain, to history, and represents the Christian theological understanding of historical events. This type of image is concerned with "prefiguration" (προεικονίζειν) of events ought to take place in the future. (91, *sic*)

> For iconophile theologians, it appears that each creation can be referred to as an image in the extended meaning, for all creations are modeled after ideas in the mind of God, the heavenly prototype. (92–93, citing I. M. Resnik)

Although Strezova's article is cited elsewhere in the pages of *Symbol and Icon* surrounding these examples, there would be no way for a reader of the book to understand the importance of Strezova's words and ideas to the formation of these passages.

One could say that all these problems exist because the author has not yet adopted certain conventions of citation. Yet Ivanović does cite secondary sources in the conventional manner throughout the book, using quotation marks or doubly indented blocks of text to indicate his direct dependence on the words of another scholar. As examples, note his use of the usual citation methods to credit the work of R. Roques at *Symbol and Icon*, 10; V. Lossky at 24; L. Bouyer at 30; E. Kitzinger at 70; and J. Marion at 87. The presence of these more conventional references to secondary works alongside the problematic passages like those I have been discussing leaves the impression that any words that appear outside of quotation marks in the book are either Ivanović's paraphrase of another author, marked as such with a footnote, or his own prose. As the examples above have shown, that would be a false impression.

While these problems of attribution are disconcerting in their own right, the book's relationship to the work of other scholars has an even larger consequence. Because so much of *Symbol and Icon* is built around passages from previously published books and articles, the book does not have a center. It does not offer its own, new argument about its topic, the role of Dionysian thought in the iconoclastic controversy. Readers seeking a scholarly treatment of that topic should look elsewhere and perhaps start with Andrew Louth's "St. Denys the Areopagite and the Iconoclast Controversy" in *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident*, ed. Ysabel de Andia (Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997) or his more recent work in *Rethinking Dionysius*, ed. Sarah Coakley and Charles M. Stang (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

In conclusion, I cannot recommend that the readers of *JECS* or institutional libraries buy this book.

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Margaret M. Mitchell
Paul, the Corinthians and the Birth of Christian Hermeneutics
Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

To read this book is both a privilege and an education because it is to see a master of her craft do what she loves with a sure hand and a keen heart. In this volume, Mitchell pursues a clearly articulated agenda to develop and demonstrate "a new way of thinking about early Christian exegesis that takes the strategic and rhetorical quality of this interpretive work more seriously" (ix). Thus grounding